

Usability test script – Demo test version

Adapted from *Rocket Surgery Made Easy*

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Use this script when you are doing a live demonstration of how to do a usability test.

The entire demo should take 15-20 minutes.

Before you start, remember to tell the audience that they are now observers and should jot down notes about the usability problems that they observe.

THE INSTRUCTIONS

3 minutes

- Web browser should be open to Google or some other “neutral” page**

Hi, [*participant’s name*]. My name is [*your name*], and I’m going to be walking you through this session today.

Before we begin, I have some information for you, and I’m going to read it to make sure that I cover everything.

You probably already have a good idea of why we asked you here, but let me go over it again briefly. We’re asking people to try using a Web site that we’re working on so we can see whether it works as intended. The session should take about fifteen minutes.

The first thing I want to make clear right away is that we’re testing the *site*, not you. You can’t do anything wrong here. In fact, this is probably the one place today where you don’t have to worry about making mistakes.

As you use the site, I’m going to ask you as much as possible to try to think out loud: to say what you’re looking at, what you’re trying to do, and what you’re thinking. This will be a big help to us.

Also, please don’t worry that you’re going to hurt our feelings. We’re doing this to improve the site, so we need to hear your honest reactions.

If you have any questions as we go along, just ask them. I may not be able to answer them right away, since we're interested in how people do when they don't have someone sitting next to them to help. But if you still have any questions when we're done I'll try to answer them then. And if you need to take a break at any point, just let me know.

You may have noticed the microphone. With your permission, we're going to record what happens on the screen and our conversation. The recording will only be used to help us figure out how to improve the site, and it won't be seen by anyone except the people working on this project. And it helps me, because I don't have to take as many notes.

Also, there are a few people from the Web design team observing this session in another room.¹ (They can't see us, just the screen.)

Do you have any questions so far?

¹ *At this point, I usually wave toward the audience, and they laugh.*

THE QUESTIONS

2 minutes

OK. Before we look at the site, I'd like to ask you just a few quick questions.

First, what's your occupation? What do you do all day?

Roughly how many hours a week altogether—just a rough estimate—would you say you spend using the Web, at work and at home?

What kinds of sites (work and personal) are you looking at when you browse the Web?

Do you have any favorite Web sites?

THE HOME PAGE TOUR

2 minutes

OK, great. We're done with the questions, and we can start looking at things.

- Click on the bookmark for the Home page of the site you're testing.**

First, I'm going to ask you to look at this page and tell me what you make of it: what strikes you about it, whose site you think it is, what you can do here, and what it's for. Just look around and do a little narrative.

You can scroll if you want to, but don't click on anything yet.

- Allow this to continue for two minutes, at most.**

THE TASK

6-10 minutes

NOTE: While the participant is doing the task, you should avoid talking except to remind them to think aloud.

When you're tempted to ask the user a question, make a mental note of it and ask it during the Probing section at the end.

Thanks. Now I'm going to ask you to try doing a task. I'm going to read it out loud and give you a printed copy.

I'm going to ask you to do the task without using Search. We'll learn a lot more about how well the site works that way.

And again, as much as possible, it will help us if you can try to think out loud as you go along.

- Hand the participant the task, and read it aloud.**
- Allow the user to proceed until they finish the task or you run out of time for this section of the test.**
- If the user finishes the first task very quickly, go on to your second task.**

PROBING

2 minutes

Thanks, that was very helpful.

Before we wrap up, I'd like to ask you one or two follow-up questions.

- Ask probing questions about anything you want to follow up on.**
- For instance, you can ask the participant to go back to a page and tell you more about why they made a particular choice.**

WRAPPING UP

30 seconds

- Thank the participant.**
- Make sure the audience gives them a round of applause.**

OBSERVER DEBRIEFING

2-5 minutes

- Ask the observers what usability problems they saw.**